

The Secrets of Antonio Pérez Decoded

Honors Research Thesis

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by

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The Introduction

A gruesome assassination took place on the streets of Madrid on the 31 March 1578. Around 7 P. M. six men surrounded Juan de Escobedo, secretary to Don Juan of Austria, the brother of King Philip II, stabbed him to death, and then fled into the darkness. The family of Escobedo launched their own investigation to determine who murdered Juan, but shortly afterwards the investigation mysteriously ended. It was not until 1590 that the king authorized an investigation into the role of his secretary of state, Antonio Pérez, in the murder. Detained in a Madrid prison, under torture Pérez admitted that he had arranged the murder – but claimed that he acted on Philip's orders. Then he escaped and fled to France, where he died twenty-one years later. Thus Pérez took his secret of whether or not he had planned the murder of Escobedo with him to the grave, or so he thought.

I began my own investigation of the death of Escobedo after meeting with Dr. Geoffrey Parker, the Andreas Dorpalen Professor of History and a major authority on the life and times of King Philip II, when he made me aware of letters that dealt with the politics of Spain during the time of the Escobedo murder. Since the documents are in a difficult sixteenth century hand, Dr. Parker allowed me to take part in his paleography class. At our first meeting of this class, Dr. Parker assigned me eight documents, written by Antonio Pérez to the Spanish ambassador of Paris, Juan de Vargas Mexia, in 1578 and 1579. The task was simply to learn how to read sixteenth century Spanish handwriting and transcribe the documents. After a few short months of paleography sessions, the handwriting began to look much easier to read. While reading the documents closely, the language used by Pérez became more and more suspicious. In one section he stated:

“Importame mucho que V.M me remita esse despacho al señor Don Juan en esta forma, que diga que le ha recibido con una carta mia de XII de Mayo y muy encomendado de mi por ser cosa que importa al servicio de su alteza, que le he remitido por la via de los correos ordinarios y que se deve de aver olvidado en el camino pues ha tardado tanto en llegar a sus manos. Y procure V.M que vaya con alguna ocasion aunque sea despachando correo, antes que lleguen los despachos que lleva este correo para su Alteza o decirle, si esto le pareciere embaraçoso, que aporlo a manos de V.M con este mismo correo remitido de Irun donde se devio aver olvidado en poder de aquellos maestros de postas, que supplica a su alteza V.M le avise de recibo.”¹

Why would Antonio Pérez tell Juan de Vargas Mexia to pretend that he received the letter at an earlier date, forcing him to deceive Don Juan de Austria? In another missive, Pérez wrote:

“Las cartas de V.M a que debo respuesta son de 7, 18, 24 de diciembre y 14 de enero. Y aquí satisfaré a los puntos dellas con dezir primero que son de mucha satisfacci3n a nuestro amo, el cual las ve todos, digo las que conuiene, y huelga mucho con los avisos y consideraciones de V.M. todo lo que escribe y assi en esto no ay dezir sino que V.M. continue en lo que hasta aquí.”²

Admitting that he had not shown the king all the letters that Vargas had sent to him was an act of treason and could have placed Pérez behind bars. This was due to the particular importance of the content in the letters dealing with the behavior of Don Juan, of whom Philip II was very suspicious. Why take such the risk? Since these were the first letters I examined of the eight selected, my interest grew, and a fascinating story slowly began to take shape.

¹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France *Manuscrit. Espagnol* 132, Folio 66, AP to VM15 June 1578

² BFN *Ms. Esp.* 132 Folio 179, AP to VM 26 January 1579

The letters of Antonio Pérez to Juan de Vargas Mexia were never meant to be seen. The survival of the letters was a product of happenstance. In 1581, Juan de Vargas Mexia died and left all his correspondence with the King, Pérez, and other important political and clerical figures in his household, but the documents that dealt with official state affairs were kept under lock and key. Additionally, many of the letters were in code, and the absence of any deciphered text suggests that either a volume is missing from the collection, containing plaintext³, or that they were so proficient they could cipher alone. These letters are significant for two major reasons. Firstly, although a considerable amount is known of the character of Pérez, based on the written works of historian Gregorio Marañón and Geoffrey Parker, the documents provide a deeper understanding of him, a side that would do anything to gain more power. Secondly, they provide information on the diplomatic system of the king, because virtually no ambassadorial archives during Philip's long reign have survived.

The eight letters are preserved in a bound volume of two-hundred and- ninety folios containing two- hundred and- nineteen original letters addressed to Juan de Vargas Mexía from October of 1577 to May of 1581 preserved in the National Library of France (currently BNF, *Manuscrit espagnol 132*, formerly #184, and before that #9999). The king sent one hundred-and eighty-three of the letters out of the total of two hundred- and- nineteen. That equals to about eighty-four percent of the missives. Pérez sent his eight letters between June 1578 and April 1579. It is clear that they were not originally bound, once they were received, but much later. Following the death of Vargas Mexia, the first caretakers of this correspondence were Jesuits, and they probably sewed the documents into a three- inch wide volume. We know this based on Belgian Archivist Gachard

³ In cryptology "plaintext" refers to the message before encryption

descriptions and summaries of the folios.⁴ Gachard entered the administration of the royal archives in 1826. Soon after he became director-general of the archives, a post which he held for forty-five years. In his catalog he described the volume, summarized the major letters, as well as printed some of them in the footnotes. Another archivist Morel-Fatio, the leading French Hispanist from 1875-1924, wrote in his catalogue that the volume was then acquired by Cardinal Mazarin, and it was placed within the Royal Library in 1688.⁵ From this we can infer that one of these two custodians, either the Jesuit monks or the Cardinal, bound the volume together. In general, the documents are in poor shape; many are damaged, having been bled through from the acidity of the ink which was used to write them. The documents are typical of the period, artisan rolled paper with ragged, feathery edges which have darkened over time. The paper used by Gabriel de Çayas, another one of Philip II secretaries of state, tended to be a thicker piece of paper for his letters; this suggests that different paper stocks were used. The thicker the paper, the harder it was for the acidic ink to bleed through, making it easier to read today. While carefully going through the documents, it is clear that the collection was composed of letters incoming to Vargas Mexia, and most came from the king and Antonio Pérez. Curiously, the first document found in the collection is a letter written to the Marqués de Ayamonte, but it has nothing to do with the rest of the correspondence in the volume. The few remaining documents were addressed to Vargas by Catharine de Medici (Queen consort of France), Count of Mansfeld and Don Juan de Acuña. Although most of the letters were written in Spanish, others were in French, Latin, and Italian. Located on the back side of a few documents is an endorsement written in Portuguese which stated what the letters contain. For example in a missive written by Philip—folio 102 verso—the Portuguese writes: ‘13th de outubro de 1578, morte do senhor d jua daustria, elecao do principe de parma.’^{6 7} This reveals that a Portuguese read through these

⁴ Gachard, Louis Prospere, *La Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1875-7), 1:415-27

⁵ Morel-Fatio *Catalogue des manuscrits espagnols et portugais de la Bibliothèque Nationale* pp. VI-VII and 70-72

⁶ BNF, Ms Esp, 132, Folio 102 verso, AP to VM 13 October 1578

letters at some stage, probably before they were bound into a volume.⁸ The eight letters from Antonio Pérez all reproduced and transcribed in the appendix below, are as follows:

<u>Folio #</u>	<u>By-To</u>	<u>Date</u>
1.) Folio 66	AP-VM	15 th of June '78
2.) Folio 87	AP-VM	13 th of Sept. '78
3.) Folio 105	AP-VM	13 th of Oct.'78
4.) Folio 136	AP-VM	5 th of March '78
5.) Folio 148	AP-VM	21 st of Nov. '78
6.) Folio 157	AP-VM	8 th of Dec. '78
7.) Folio 179	AP-VM	26 th of Jan. '79
8.) Folio 198	AP-VM	15 th of April '79

In the beginning of the fall quarter of 2010, Dr Parker secured for me from a colleague a complete scanned copy of BNF manuscrit espagnol 132. Although the manuscripts are clearly important they have not been systematically examined until now and yet they – especially the eight Pérez holographs – provide important insights into the secretary and his methods. Specifically they relay information about how the office of secretary of state functioned, receiving and relaying letters to the king, dispatching money orders to the bankers and so on. The microfilm copies proved difficult to transcribe. This was not because of the handwriting of Antonio Pérez or his aides, but rather because the tight binding of the manuscript, from which the copies were produced, obstructed

⁷ Gachard, Louis Prospere, *La Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1875-7), 1: 416; Gachard cites a letter from the Archivo de Simancas, Diego de Maldonado (acting Spanish ambassador) to Philip, on 23 September 1580 announced that Vargas Mexia papers were in the hands of local Jesuits

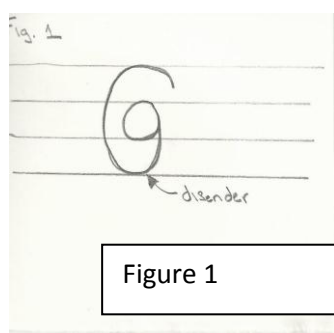
⁸ These markings are also represented on other folios such as: folio 1-2 (Philip to Vargas Mexia dated 19 October 1577), folio 103 and 105. All of the letters dating 13 October are endorsed and the scribe states they are from “casa de Antonio Pérez”.

sections of words and codes in the inside margin. Thus, I was able to determine some of the words, based on context, clues, and pure sentence structure in the Spanish language. Not wanting to chance getting a piece wrong, based on the value of the letters and their content, it became apparent that I would need to view the original documents personally.

In October 2011, I traveled to Paris to consult the original eight letters of Pérez in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Since I was an undergraduate student, I had to obtain special permission to examine and work with the documents. After presenting documentation from The Ohio State University, stating my purpose for viewing the documents, I was granted access into the investigation room where I ordered *manuscrit espagnol 132*, and waited patiently for it. After two hours, the archivist came over and stated that because of the poor condition of the binding and documents themselves, the volume could only be viewed on microfilm. Luckily I had brought the scans and so could demonstrate the need to view the originals in order to determine the missing words and codes. Two hours later, I received the volume but was told that I could only view it that afternoon, not the following day or later.

I located eight letters from Antonio Pérez to Vargas Mexia, and got to work. From the manuscript, in its original form, I was able to gather much information on the current physical state of the letters as well as key elements of the text that had been obscured by the binding process. Without having looked at the documents in their original state, however, it would have been considerably more difficult to write the transcriptions correctly.

In determining how to read these sixteenth-century Spanish documents, I came across two major problems: the handwriting and the abbreviations. Since many of the documents were in a fragile state, reading the handwriting from the acid bleed through is challenging. The difficulty



affected both sides of the document, since the acid ink and writing

obscure the backside of the letter and its text. After weeks of comparing documents that had been previously translated the handwriting and abbreviations became clearer. For example, in many documents of the sixteenth century, the word ‘que’ will be abbreviated as a single letter, the letter “q” but with its disender (the loop of the symbol) conveyed to the left and around the letter over the top.⁹ Apart from these constants in the abbreviations, Antonio Pérez would often use abbreviations for words such as: ‘excelentissimo’, and even ‘manos’, ‘mayor’, and ‘besa’. In addition, the handwriting of Antonio Pérez proved to be very difficult. Since most writers of the day used no punctuation, words and sentences would run on together, making it harder to determine his meaning. In the later documents used for this project, Pérez began to use dashes to indicate the end of a sentence. To add to the difficulty of reading the letters, many sections are in code. Thus in many cases, a sentence may begin and end in Spanish with a long middle in cipher.

Although some of Antonio Pérez’s letters to Juan de Vargas Mexia, are written in code, there is still a considerable amount of Spanish which allows me to speculate about what the coded sections may reference. I therefore divided the content of the letters into four topics: deception, family, money and the use of cipher, and all four themes appear in the same manuscript. The theme of deception appeared in two of the eight letters. The first, folio 66, mentioned earlier, asks Vargas Mexia to deceive Don Juan by telling him he received the letter much earlier than the date it was sent, 15 June 1578. The second letter continuing with the theme of deception is folio 179, written on the 25 January 1579. In this letter, Antonio Pérez admits that he has not shown the King Philip II all the letters sent to him. This of course is an act of treason and could have placed Pérez in jail or worse, because they concerned the actions of the stepbrother of Philip II, Don Juan de Austria. The most interesting aspect perhaps is that sections of this document are in cipher, but this potentially

⁹ See fig. 1 for detail of abbreviation

damaging letter is not. What could have been more incriminating than a possible charge of treason, perhaps incriminating Pérez in the death of Escobedo?

Although the documents have many differences, a common denominator among them is the way that the correspondent introduced and concluded each letter. Nearly all of the missives begin listing the letters which have been previous received, including their dates. Once the content of the letter is written the correspondent will always conclude with the date and place from which was sent. Additionally, some of the correspondences contain a postscript, normally by Antonio Pérez himself. These postscripts may refer to an event that just took place or as an addition to information. In folio 68, although not written by Antonio Pérez but rather Hernando de Escobar,¹⁰ the author talks about the clocks that the king wanted.¹¹ Most of the eight letters, however, deal with money. Since no letters from Vargas Mexia to Antonio Pérez survived, we can deduce from Antonio's response that Vargas Mexia found himself in debt and evidently asked Antonio Pérez for help in petitioning the king to provide money to cover his expenses as ambassador. Through the replies of Pérez to these letters the close relationship between the men becomes clear, a relationship in which they could confide in the other. In folio 87, Pérez began the letter dated 13 September 1578 by listing the 'cartas' which he had received. Pérez continued by informing Vargas Mexia about his family life and his unfulfilled hopes that his wife would bear a son, because she bore him a daughter 'parió pero hija.'¹² Pérez also made reference to a conversation with the king concerning the money Mexia had requested and stated that he would arrange the dispatch of a cédula¹³ for two hundred ducados. Since it took a long time for any bit of correspondence to reach a recipient, many of the letters include

¹⁰ Hernando de Escobar was the "Oficial Mayor" and also probably the cousin of Antonio Pérez because Pérez mother's last name was Escobar.

¹¹ "El reloj de sol ha de ser el gobierno de las muestras y por esto se dessea de la manera que tengo escrito." BNF, *Ms Esp* 132 Folio 68

¹² BNF. *Ms Esp*. 132 Folio 87, AP to VM 13 September 1578

¹³ A cédula is a royal edict from the king stating that action must be made in his name. In this case Vargas Mexia asks Antonio Pérez to ask Philip II to write a cédula which ordered money to be given to him to carry out his duties as ambassador.

other bits of information within them. For instance, in the last paragraph Pérez mentions the death of the nephew of Philip II, King Sebastian of Portugal. He continued that the throne was now left to his sickly, aged uncle, Cardinal Henry, but then Philip had a clear line of succession. Folio number 157; dated 8 October 1578 again addressed the cédula, which was to be sent to Vargas Mexia. He tells Mexia that the cédula had been detained, but he planned to talk to Francisco Garnica, the King's principal treasury official, to resolve the problem as soon as possible, adding that he hoped to have 2,000 escudos in the mail by that night. The last letter dealing with finances is folio 136, dated 5 November 1578. This letter left with another sent to the prince of Parma whom he commanded to provide money for the demobilization of the German soldiers who had campaigned with Don Juan in Flanders. In the letter he reassured Mexia by stating that he had indeed spoken with Garnica and that Vargas Mexia would receive a cédula of 6, 000 ducados from the treasury to resolve his financial problems. These three folios suggest one of two conclusions: either Philip II failed to provide his ambassador, Juan de Vargas Mexia, with the funds required to do his job effectively, or else his officials, such as banker Alonso de Curiel, experienced difficulties in making the funds available in Paris. Either way, it took the intervention of the royal secretary of state to fix the problem.

Decoding historical texts is not always a simple task, particularly when attempting to read or decode the letters of Antonio Pérez. For instance, two of the letters folios, 87 and 136, provide reason to believe that Hernando de Escobar probably wrote them, based on the difference in handwriting and style. Since folio 87 has some sentences in cipher, it can be assumed that perhaps the cipher is not so different from that of the king and the knowledge of the royal court ambassadors. In the remaining letters, one folio is in complete cipher, folio 105; whereas folio 157 and 198 are partially in cipher. Perhaps the most intriguing letter of these three is folio 198, dated on 15 April 1579, written mostly in cipher, containing only a few sentences in Spanish, which seems likely to be

the confession of Antonio Pérez about rumors circulation of his involvement in the Escobedo murder. As he wrote:

‘Porque no dudo sino que aura llegado por alla las gritas y mentirras que han corrido por aqui estos días de cosas mias. Diré aquí brevemente a V.M. la verdad de lo que passa por su satisfaction. ‘¹⁴

It is clear from this passage that Antonio Pérez worried about public doubts concerning his role in the death of Escobedo, and particularly what his friend Vargas Mexia might think of him. In addition, the missive contains a postscript written by Hernando de Escobar stating that he had nothing to add and time did not allow him to do so, which may indicate that he knew about Pérez’s involvement in the murder. My research indicates that Antonio Pérez, and possibly the king; both played a major role in the murder of Escobedo. As we look back at the narrative of this mystery, there are many questions that remain: What would have angered the King so much that he gave a ‘consentimiento’ to the murder of Escobedo instead of a judicial trial?¹⁵ Could Pérez have relayed false information to the king and tricked him into giving consent? Antonio Pérez was very smart and knew exactly how to achieve what he wanted. Since he had the ear of the king, and was the sole communicator between Don Juan and the King, he could have easily falsified information. Additionally, rumors were floating around about the close relationship between the Princess of Eboli and Pérez. Did Escobedo have incriminating information on Antonio Pérez that might have led him to conspire against the secretary? Finally, how was it that Antonio Pérez was able to escape prosecution so many times? Only the ciphered sections within these letters will answer these (and perhaps other) questions.

¹⁴ BNF *Ms Esp* 132 Folio 198, AP to VM 15 April 1579

¹⁵ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp.663-667

Key Players

The letters present a select group of historically important actors: King Philip II, his illegitimate brother Don Juan de Austria, and Antonio Pérez all of whom play into the mystery of the murder of the secretary to Don Juan, Juan de Escobedo. Another player, although not involved with the murder is Juan de Vargas Mexia. It is through the correspondences from Antonio Pérez that we learn about Pérez life, secretarial duties as well as a possible confession to his role in the murder. The events leading up to the murder were almost as, if not more, important than the event itself. In order to understand the reasons behind the heinous crime, one needs to understand the political struggles during the reign of Philip II, the struggle with the Netherlands, and ultimately the interaction among the key figures.

In 1566, Philip faced an ongoing revolt of his Protestant subjects in the Netherlands. Each adviser to the king advocated a different position on how to handle the matter. The Duke of Alba and his supporters wanted a ruthless repression of the revolt, while the Prince of Eboli, who was discreetly sympathetic with the rebels, favored a negotiated settlement with the Dutch rebels. Initially the King sent the Duke of Alba to the Netherlands to suppress the revolutionaries. In 1573, after nearly six years of bloody stalemate, Philip decided to remove the Duke and turned to the ideas of the Prince of Eboli.¹⁶ Although Eboli died that summer, Antonio Pérez, the secretary of state to Philip II and a strong supporter and friend of Eboli, persuaded the King to take a more conciliatory line; thus Philip appointed Don Luis de Requesens, then governor of Milan, to carry out the policy of pacification or negotiation. Unexpectedly, Requesens followed the policies of the Duke of Alba rather than those of Pérez and Eboli. Three years later, due to poor health, Requesens died, leaving the Netherlands without clear leadership. Fearing the imminent collapse of the Spanish regime, Philip II decided to send his half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, to the Netherlands.

¹⁶ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 573

The appointment of Don Juan in the Netherlands meant that the King's policies were now very much in line with those of the Eboli faction. Upon arriving in the Netherlands, Don Juan insisted on permission to respect the laws and privileges of the Dutch, to grant religious toleration, and correspond with the king only through the hands of Antonio Pérez, rather than those of Gabriel de Zayas, a protégé of the Duke of Alba. He also asked the king for authorization to invade England, an action opposed by the Duke of Alba but supported by the Papacy. Although the king wanted peace within the Netherlands, he was not ready either to grant toleration or to go to war with Elizabeth, Queen of England.¹⁷ With no money to fund a war and unable to make peace on terms that the Dutch Protestants would accept, Don Juan became all the more obsessed by his ambition to conquer England. While this played out, Don Juan sent his secretary —Juan de Escobedo— to Madrid to ask the King for money.

Escobedo was a man who understood well his place and job as secretary. In 1558, he worked in the service of Ruy Gomez, the Prince of Eboli and in 1566 he was appointed as 'secretario de hacienda' by Philip. Shortly afterwards, in 1573, Ruy Gomez and Antonio Pérez persuaded Philip to make Escobedo Don Juan's new secretary. Since he had loyalty to both Pérez and Gomez, the King felt Escobedo could serve him well, keeping an eye on his half-brother. Soon after his acceptance of the position, Escobedo became sympathetic to the ambitions and ideas of Don Juan. This led to tensions between the king and ultimately Antonio Pérez.

There has been speculation that Antonio Pérez convinced Philip that Don Juan had conspired against the king, and that Escobedo encouraged it; thus Philip gave permission to Antonio Pérez to have his brother's troublesome secretary 'put out of his way.' Pérez employed Antonio Enriquez and Diego Martinez to take care of the deed. Based on the letters exchanged between these three men, there is reason to believe that the planning and execution of the murder plot was over a course of

¹⁷ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 597

three or four months. During these months, there were a series of attempts to murder Juan de Escobedo by poison. At a dinner party, Pérez invited Escobedo to the house of Jacobo Grimaldo where they were to dine. Every time Escobedo asked for a drink, Enriquez, one of the assassins, brought him a cup of wine with poison. Two times in the same night he repeated the doses, but the poison did not take effect. The second attempt on the life of Escobedo was at dinner at the house of Antonio Pérez. This time, it was Diego Martinez who brought the poisonous cup to Escobedo and within one drink; he began to feel bad, ‘tuvo grandes Dolores y vomitos, no quiso seguir comiendo.’¹⁸ After the recovery of Juan de Escobedo, a third attempt was made to poison the secretary. While at dinner, he felt sick and noticed that the food came from ‘una esclava morisca,’ she was later arrested, tried and executed. After all these feeble attempts to end the life of Juan de Escobedo, it was not until the 31 March, 1578 that Escobedo was stabbed to death by another assassin named Insausti.¹⁹

After the death of Escobedo, Philip became very suspicious of the motives of his Secretary of State, and realized that he had given, although not directly, his consent to the heinous crime. Nevertheless, because of the influence Antonio Pérez commanded and the secret matters of State he was involved in, the king could not arrest him immediately and risk damaging the monarchy. Since the murder took place during la Semana Santa, much like the King²⁰, Antonio Pérez made sure he was outside of Madrid. He went to the Alcalá de Henares, much like every year, with his wife and children, staying with Alonso Beltrán, chief sheriff of the city. This provided him an alibi in case he was ever questioned about his involvement of the murder.

Until recently, the involvement of Antonio Pérez in the murder of Escobedo was based purely on testimony obtained during torture and speculation by those directly involved, such as Antonio

¹⁸ Marañón, Gregorio *Antonio Pérez* (Madrid; Espasa- Calpe, 1947). 388

¹⁹ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 668

²⁰ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 698: The King was spending Semana Santa in San Lorenzo

Enriquez and Diego Martinez,²¹ as well as of Antonio Pérez himself. Through the correspondence between Vargas Mexia and Antonio Pérez, we may finally have concrete information about what Pérez thought of and did to be involved with the murder.

Virtually nothing is known about Juan de Vargas Mexia, but his will and testament offers some clues. While searching for information on him throughout the Spanish biographies, I found a website containing some clauses from his will. In the eighteenth century, the descendants of the principal beneficiary who wanted to receive the money bequeathed in the will printed the relevant clauses of two versions of the document. Although not the original testament, but rather a summary, it was clearly made by someone who had the originals in front of them. In some clauses, Vargas Mexía described his own life. Although Juan de Vargas Mexia began working for the crown in 1550, there are apparently no records of what he did until in 1573 the king appointed him ambassador to Savoy, promoting him in 1577 to be his ambassador to Paris, the most important diplomatic posting in the entire Spanish Monarchy. Philip clearly trusted the family of Juan de Vargas Mexia, since his elder brother—Francisco de Vargas—served as his ambassador at Venice, Rome and the council of Trent, all of them prestigious posts. . In recognition of his thirty years of devout service to the crown, the king awarded Mexia the ‘hábito de Santiago’ on the 24 June 1576.

Mexia was also a patron to the church and schools. In *Hijos de Madrid*²² we learn that he founded in Madrid primogeniture (or bienes) for his descendants in the ‘Parroquia de Santiago con Capilla pro-propio.’²³ With his title of San Juan in the Church of Santa Clara de Monjas Franscicas he set up various memorias, trust funds, and donations for his family. Vargas Mexia also left money to have a statue erected of himself praying in front of the alter at Santa Clara with a plaque stating

²¹ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 667

²² A book which gives a brief biography on specific men throughout Spanish history

²³ José Antonio Álvarez y Baena, *Hijos de Madrid* (Madrid, 1970) 3: 120-1

the good deeds he performed in his life time, such as founding a school in Salamanca and provided a trust fund for the students to use.

The most interesting part of this will from the standpoint of this project is printed dramatic change in beneficiaries between the two versions. In 1577, just before leaving Madrid for the Paris embassy, Vargas Mexia composed his will which included funds he would leave behind for his family, the school and others. He proclaimed that a trust fund would be given to all the male members of his family to attend the university; about 30,000 mris per year for up to ten to twelve years.²⁴ If no family member survived to use it, he offered it to the male children of Antonio Pérez and his wife Juana de Coello. This should cause no surprise, because the eight personal letters in Paris reveal that the two correspondents enjoyed a strong relationship, both in the work place and outside. Pérez frequently referred to their family lives and inquired into the other's personal life, and clearly Vargas Mexia reciprocated in the letters (now lost) to which Pérez replied.²⁵ He even made Antonio Pérez the executor of his will.

And yet, in a revised draft of his will, drawn up in Paris in 1580, Mexia dropped all reference to Pérez and his family. Their exclusion is an astounding revelation based on the dates alone. In the last surviving letter—and since *Manuscrit Espagnol* contains many subsequent letters from the king, the absence of any more from Pérez is surely significant —Pérez wrote Mexia a ‘tell all’ missive— on 15 April 1579, one year and one month after the murder—which (Pérez claimed) stated the true facts about his involvement in the murder of Escobedo.²⁶ Could this letter be the reason for Antonio Pérez's excision from Vargas Mexia will? What could Antonio Pérez have stated to make his colleague, and friend, enraged enough to end all connection between them? The answer probably lies in the long section coded by Pérez himself in that letter.

²⁴ José Antonio Álvarez y Baena, *Hijos de Madrid* (Madrid, 1970) 3: 120-1; refer to Appendix I for copy

²⁵ Refer back to transcript of Folio 87 in Appendix I

²⁶ See transcript of Folio 198 in Appendix I

The Decoding Process

For the past four thousand plus years, governments, royal officials, and nobles throughout the world have placed high profile documents and missives into code. It was thought that this type of concealment would hinder the discovery of the documents' content from any unwanted lector. As it would turn out, many of the codes or ciphers were broken, some in no time at all. With the rise of Western powers during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, ciphered documents played a major role in modern diplomacy. During this time, it was common for many ambassadorial reports to be intercepted, read, and if necessary crypt-analyzed.²⁷ By the end of the fifteenth century, cryptology became so important that many governments had special secretaries whose full-time job was to create new keys, encipher and decipher messages and solve intercepted missives. During the reign of Philip II, all of his secretaries knew a multitude of codes, which would be employed for certain correspondences based on their content and the recipient. Through the letters of Antonio Pérez, we find that the code he used in correspondence with Vargas Mexia is very different from that of the royal court and documents.

The nomenclature in cryptology is very important. While attempting to figure out what an encrypted letter means, it is first important to determine what type of encryption it is; that is to say, whether the missive is in code or cipher. A code consists of thousands of words, letters and syllables with code groups that replace a plaintext, or the message that will be placed into secret form. A cipher is simply a shorter version of a code in which the basic unit is a letter or sometimes a letter-pair. When placing a document in code one can use two basic transformations: transposition and substitution. In transposition the letters of a plaintext are

²⁷ Kahn, David *The Codebreakers* (London; Redwood Burn Limited, 1974). 83

simply jumbled up. For example: the word *statement* would be written as EMTASTNET. However, transposition allows for missives to be easily intercepted and decoded. More commonly used was substitution in which the letters of a plaintext are replaced by other letters, numbers or symbols. Thus *Statement* could be written as 12+ 98 1 5 34- 00 9> 21 6.²⁸ Many times a plaintext which invoked this type of substitution also used alternates called homophones. These homophones allowed letters to have multiple figures. Therefore the letter *s* could be 12+, 16, 90, 65 or 7. To throw off the enemy cipher secretaries, many governments or royal officials would use a cipher alphabet that contained symbols that meant nothing, called nulls, in order to deceive or confuse its inceptors.

In a total of four hundred and fifteen years, from the fifteenth century to about eighteen-fifty, a system that was half code and half a cipher dominated cryptography. It consisted of a separate alphabet with homophones and code-like lists of names, words and syllables. Once the document was enciphered the result was a ciphertext or codetext. Then once it was received, either by its rightful recipient or an enemy, the document was decoded or cryptanalyzed. To decode a document suggests that the 'person legitimately possesses the key or system to reverse the transformations and bare the original message.'²⁹ In contrast, to cryptanalyze a document means that the person who does not possess the key or knowledge of the system cracks the code. During the reign of Philip II, much like many other reigns during the sixteenth century, the process of coding and decoding went through many stages.

In October 1555 Charles abdicated in favor of his son Philip II as ruler of the Netherlands, and three months later he did the same for his kingdoms of Spain. During his stay in Brussels, Philip wrote to his uncle Ferdinand informing him that he planned to change the cipher that his father had used to communicate with his ministers in Italy and other parts

²⁸ Kahn, David *The Codebreakers* (London; Redwood Burn Limited, 1974). xi

²⁹ Kahn, David *The Codebreakers* (London; Redwood Burn Limited, 1974). xv

of Europe; not only was the cipher old but it had been compromised. Between 1556 and 1590, the King and his officials employed three types of ciphers: Non-Alphanumeric symbols, symbols representing syllables and nomenclature. The first in the list is primitive in the sense that it tended to use non-alphanumeric symbols that contributed little to the security of the cipher. The next trend was the use of symbols to represent syllables. For example, while looking into how the codes during the reign of Philip II worked, I decoded sections of a letter from the king to Juan de Vargas Mexia by comparing the plaintext to that of the cipher. I found that the Spanish word *adelante*, composed of six syllables, was written as (10 6 15+^ 24. 15+).³⁰ Finally the Spanish employed nomenclatures to conceal their documents from unwanted eyes. It is characterized by a mixture of letter codes and numbers, occasionally with diacritic signs. Many nomenclatures of that time only used numbers up to 99, with some few exceptions when coding names, places and specific references to items.³¹ Although the king and his officials changed their ciphers around throughout the years, this was due to the fact that many of them were intercepted and decoded from enemies or spies in other countries.

On 1589, the king of France—Henry IV—who had recently ascended to the throne, found himself embroiled in a fierce, bitter contest with the Holy League, a Catholic faction that refused to concede that a Protestant could bear the crown. This faction had in fact received money and men from Philip to help support their argument. It was through transactions between Philip and his liaisons, Commander Juan de Moreo and Ambassador Manosse, that Henry discovered the dealings between the Holy League and the king of Spain. The letter, of great importance, could cause major problems if intercepted in its plaintext, was in cipher. The message was couched in a new nomenclature that Philip had specially given

³⁰ BNF. *Ms Esp. 132* Folio 257 P2 to VM 28 de Marzo 1580

³¹ *Spanish Ciphers During the Reign of Philip II*
<http://www.h4.dion.ne.jp/~room4me/america/code/spanish3.htm>

Moreo when he departed for France. The king of France employed François Viète, a councilor of the parliament and a privy counselor to Henry, who had previously cracked a Spanish dispatch addressed to the Duke of Parma—Alessandro Farnese—who headed the Spanish forces of the League. The letter from Moreo was dated October 28, 1589, and was cracked by Viète six months later in March. The cipher consisted of the usual alphabet with homophonic substitutions, plus a code list of four hundred and thirteen terms represented by groups of two or three letters (LO=Spain, POM=King of Spain) or of two numbers, either underlined or dotted (64 = confederation).³² As Henry was receiving these reports, Philip learned, from his own intercepted letters, that Viète succeeded in breaking the Spanish code which the king thought was unbreakable. With this discovery the King then changed the cipher once again.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, state officials possessed three volumes containing one-hundred and eighty to two-hundred cipher-codes or decipherments of intercepted dispatches from that reign. Provided with an index of persons for whom they were constructed, and the approximate dates of their construction allows cryptologists and historians to piece together how missives were decoded in the past. The collection contains two documents of great importance to this project; both of them ciphers used by specifically Don Juan de Austria and Juan de Escobedo. As already once the king sent Don Juan of Austria to the Netherlands, the king's ambitious half-brother decided to topple Elizabeth of England in order to obtain a throne for himself. Towards the end of June, a packet of letters in cipher addressed to Don Juan and his secretary—Escobedo—was intercepted by the Huguenot leaders and sent to the Dutch. After Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, a cryptanalyst deciphered the letters and discovered Spain's plan to regain control of Holland and Zealand

³² Kahn, David *The Codebreakers* (London; Redwood Burn Limited, 1974). 84

to invade England, tensions grew. The pieces that we have from this cipher come from Sainte-Aldegonde's key to the cipher, worked out from these momentous letters, is in his own handwriting. Both these ciphers are complex because they use both substitution and homophone. Later, with tensions building between England and Spain, Philip began to support attempts to overthrow the Protestant Queen of England—Elizabeth—in favor of Mary the Queen of Scots a Catholic. An opportunity arose in 1586, a former page—Anthony Babington—of Mary's organized and plotted for courtiers to assassinate Elizabeth, provoke a Catholic uprising, lacing Mary on the throne. Babington received support from Philip, who promised to send an expedition to help gain Mary the throne, provided that Elizabeth was dead.³³ Again letters were intercepted by the French and English and the new Spanish codes were once again broken. The question then arises how did these cryptanalyst crack the codes of high ranking Spanish officials and can the same methods be applied to the letters of Antonio Pérez?

The first step to understanding the letters was to find a "plaintext," or a message written before encryption. The second is to find the exact same code used or one that is similar. In November, I found a website which cataloged all of the ciphers used during the reign of Philip II. Shortly afterwards, I located ciphers by Don Juan and Escobedo in State Papers Online. In order to begin the process of breaking the code of Antonio Pérez, I needed to create a facsimile using the ciphers from the reign of Philip II. First, I needed to find a letter, written by the king to Juan de Vargas Mexia, around the same date. Even more important was finding a letter for which both the encrypted and plaintext version have survived. Although many people believe codes were done mathematically, and indeed many were, the king seemed to use one based on phonetics. Through a very tedious process, I began to look at the beginning paragraphs of both the clear and ciphered text

³³ Kahn, David *The Codebreakers* (London; Redwood Burn Limited, 1974). 87

and sought out the easy words, such as ‘he’ the present perfect form of ‘I’. After determining that the cipher was written phonetically, it made sense in the coded letter that the word was represented as ‘12’. Hopeful that the same process would work for the letters written by Antonio Pérez, I began to scour the documents for ways to make sense of the encryption. It was only then that I realized the process and code were much different from that employed by the king. Aiding my statement mentioned above, either both correspondents were well versed in this coded prose or there is a missing volume of Vargas’s decoded versions. The issue that I faced was to locate the plaintext.

First, I looked at the letters from Philip II to Juan de Vargas Mexia around the same period. In folio 257 dated the 28th of March, 1580 (only one year off from the folio 198 in which Antonio writes his tell all to Mexia), I examined the plaintext along with the letter still in cipher to help understand which type of cipher the Spanish used during this time. Through this analysis, I determined that the king was using symbols to represent syllables in the Spanish language. An example of this would be the word *resolución* is written out as 22 25e 155 72 and 18 with a carrot over top the one and eight.³⁴ The consistency of these symbols, which corresponded with the syllables, helped provide a method for cracking the code of Philip II. Similarly, I tried the same process on a letter from Philip to Vargas Mexia dated 16th of May 1580 and found that the same symbols corresponded to the same syllables in both letters.³⁵ Although I determined the trend for the letters sent to Vargas Mexia from Philip, comparing them to Antonio Pérez missives proved to be much more intricate. The first problem that I ran into was that the letters by Antonio Pérez did not have a plaintext accompanied with it in the folio. This meant that in order to solve the code written by Pérez, one would have to find links between the individual letters themselves as well as use mathematics. When using mathematics to decode ciphers that are based on symbols which

³⁴ BNF Ms. Esp. 132 Folio 257 P2 to VM 28 March 1580

³⁵ BNF Ms. Esp. 132 Folio 267, P2 to VM 16 May 1580: The word *platica*, found in both folio 257 and 267 are the same symbols to represent the syllables.

replace syllables—in the case of the Pérez letters they are numbers and symbols—you first need to discover the syllable frequency. A syllable frequency is a composite of all the syllables in the Spanish language and displays the amount that each is used. For the Spanish language, and many other romance languages, words are composited of two-part and third-part syllables. The most common two-part syllables are EN, DE, and ER, and their frequency of use in Spanish is 3.01%, 2.77%, and 2.25% respectively. Third-part syllables, QUE, ENT, NTE, although they do not have as high of a frequency as two-part syllables, they make up 1.66%, 1.38% and 1.07% of the Spanish language.³⁶ Once I determined this, I looked at one folio—folio 198—and attempted to count how many times a certain combination of numbers and symbols came up. From there I attempted to calculate the ratio and thus the frequency of the numbers to compare them to the list of the syllable frequencies. The problem arose when there was not a consistent amount of symbols and numbers which would allow for a frequency count. This suggests that Antonio Pérez may have used multiple homophones. Thus without the plaintext and the lack of ability to calculate a frequency syllable list, another method to solve the cipher needed to be found.

The next step was to compare the letters of Antonio Pérez to the handwritten description of the ciphers by Don Juan and Escobedo dated in 1580. Unlike the success that came from using the plaintext and ciphered letters from Philip, these codes were not even remotely close to that of the letters from Antonio Pérez since they used letters, numbers and symbols, where as Antonio only used numbers and symbols to denote a word. What does this mean for the decoding of Antonio Pérez's letters? The lack of a plaintext, key or a mathematical heading for how to figure out the code between Antonio Pérez and Juan de Vargas Mexia leaves us with part of the story and secret untold. However, a great deal of

³⁶ <http://www.sttmedia.com/syllablefrequency-spanish>

information has been uncovered through the letters in terms of content, historical events and relationships between the two correspondents. Furthermore the letter demonstrates that both correspondents had created a cipher that only they could understand, making it even more difficult to decode. Thus more questions arise: what significance does these letters have on how historians view Antonio Pérez and his actions throughout these years? If the king had ever seen them, would the fate of Antonio Pérez been any different? Since it took Viète six months working full time to crack this code, I too will require more time to crack the code of Antonio Pérez and Vargas Mexia.

Conclusion

History is not always clear cut. It is the job of historians to dig deep into its mysteries and find the gem within. The death of Juan de Escobedo has excited interest since the moment Insausti killed him. The mere fact that it was a case never solved today makes it all the more interesting. Although Philip II knew that Pérez had arranged to murder his brother's secretary, the puzzling part of the story is how Pérez convinced him to give his 'consentimiento' to carry out the crime.

Although I was unable to crack the cipher used by Antonio Pérez, for the time being, I have learned a great deal about how codes work. We know that the cipher used by Juan de Vargas Mexia and Philip consisted of two letter syllables which were represented by a base symbol (an Arabic numeral) and a vowel indicator and that the base syllable was the same as in the cipher alphabet. Furthermore, three-letter syllables were formed by combining a plaintext letter with a vowel indicator. For example the symbols for *bla* and *cla* are formed by combining a capital letter B, C with a vowel indicator. However the symbols for *gra*, *fra*, *pra*,

and *tra* are formed by combining the small letters g, f, p, and t and a vowel indicator.

Unfortunately this is not the case in the cipher used in missives between Pérez and Mexia. So what in fact did we learn from these letters if they are still encrypted? Was this in fact a waste of time?

From the moment that I started studying these letters I knew they were of great importance to the mystery of Antonio Pérez. Since I was unable to decode the letters, I was lucky enough to find the will of Juan de Vargas Mexia. The importance of this is the dates of the two drafts of his will along with the content and inclusion/exclusion of Pérez from the will. Before Vargas Mexia receives the letter on 15 April 1579, he had included Antonio Pérez and his family in his will and endowed them with a substantial amount of money upon his death. After receiving the letter in question, Mexia changed his will and wrote both Antonio Pérez and his family out of his will in 1580. This evidence shows us that no one, not even one of Antonio Pérez's closest associates, believed his innocence in the murder of Escobedo.

On 28 July 1579, Antonio Pérez and the Princess of Eboli were arrested for their alleged involvement in the murder of Juan de Escobedo a year earlier. After being placed under house arrest for years, in 1584 Pérez was called to a "visita" which was an auditing of his service to the king. This review accused him of corruption and the alteration of ciphered messages to the king. This accusation by the king coincides with what we have seen in Manuscript Espagnol 132, where Antonio Pérez confessed to Vargas Mexia the alteration of such letters. In 1587 he was formally accused of the murder of Escobedo, but the judicial process at this time moved very slowly and Pérez was moved from place to place under arrest. In the early months of 1590, Antonio Pérez was questioned under torture and only eluded to the involvement of Philip II in the murder and that he, Antonio Pérez, was only

following the orders of ‘su magestad.’³⁷ Through the help of his wife, Juana Coello, he escaped from prison and fled to the borders of Aragon.³⁸ Since Aragon was a separate kingdom and had its own “fueros” or laws, Philip could not have Antonio Pérez sent back. In the years that Philip tried to prosecute Pérez in Aragon, but his efforts provoked a major rebellion. Furthermore the wife and children of Pérez had been imprisoned by the king and it was not until Philip death in 1598 that they were released. In 1593, Antonio Pérez escaped from prison once more and fled to France, where he remained until his death in 1611.

The Manuscript/ Appendix I

Folio 66:

³⁷ Marañón, Gregorio *Antonio Pérez* (Madrid; Espasa- Calpe, 1947). 379

³⁸ Parker, Geoffrey. *Felipe II. La biografía definitiva* (Barcelona, 2010) pp. 872

+

Senor

66.

Importame muss. q. v. m. me remita esse deppas,
allí donji en esta forma, q. diga q. le ha rec-
bido con una carta mia de vij de Mayo y muy
encomendado de mi por ser cosa q. importa al
Suy de su Alta, q. le se remittido por la via
delos correos ordinarios y q. se deue deauer
oluidado en el camino pues se tardado tanto
en llegar a sus manos j. y procurar v. m. q.
vaya con alguna ocasion a un fca deppa
quando correos, antes q. lleguen los deppas
llena este correo para su Alteza, o dezi le
si esto le pareciere embaracoso, q. apor-
ta a manos de v. m. con este mismo correo
remittido de frun donde se deuio a d. olui-
dado en poder de aquellos maestros de posta,
q. sup. ca. a su Alta. v. m. le auise del recibo,
v. m. me entienda, q. la suma dello es, q.
no parezca q. sale de mi agora este deppas,
fino q. me le dio su dueño deppas de partido
el correo a 4 o 5 de mayo y q. yole
embie por la via delos ordm. a 12 de mayo, le
des en la sustancia q. effrino al S. donji.
nro R. eff. de seg. a 12 de junio 1578

De V. m.

Ant. Seren.

Summary of Text in English:

Antonio Pérez asks Vargas Mexia to pretend he received the letter in question before this one, even though it had just arrived. This letter, which came with another for Don Juan, must be given to him before the others arrive. Thus Don Juan must not think that Pérez had just sent them: Vargas Mexia must tell Don Juan that the letter got lost on the way. The letter provides insight into the deception of Don Juan and character of Antonio Pérez.

Transcription:

Importame mucho que V.M me remita esse despacho al señor Don Juan en esta forma, que diga que le ha recibido con una carta mia de XII de Mayo y muy encomendado de mi por ser cosa que importa al servicio de su alteza, que le he remitido por la via de los correos ordinarios y que se deve de aver olvidado en el camino pues ha tardado tanto en llegar a sus manos. Y procure V.M que vaya con alguna ocasion aunque sea despachando correo, antes que lleguen los despachos que lleva este correo para su Alteza o decirle, si esto le pareciere embaraçoso, que aporte a manos de V.M con este mismo correo remitido de Irun donde se devio aver olvidado en poder de aquellos maestros de postas, que supplica a su alteza V.M le avise de recibo. V.M me entiende, que la suma de ello es que no parezca que sale de mi agora este despacho sino que me le dio su dueño después de partido el correo a 4 o 5 de mayo y que yo le embie por la via de los ordinarios a 12 de mayo que es en la sustancia que escribió al Señor Don Juan. Nuestro etc de Segovia a XV de Junio 1578

De V.M

Antonio Pérez

Folio 87:

Handwritten signature or initials at the top of the page.

Esta respondere a tres cartas de v.m. de 4
24 y 25 de agosto y v.m. dire que me ha pasado
esto de no aver tenido lugar de ffrer largo av.m.
con los correos pasados pero cierto no se podio mas
y bien lo crea v.m. pues no lo se sehol.

Tambien dire primera que me ha pasado mucho del de
graciado por lo de mi P.ª doña Isabel, que estava
muy contento por el contentam. de v.m. pero por
ya son de prueva entrambos se podra remediar
el dano. Doña Juana varis pero hija, y
estava con deseo de recobrar a Her.ª, quica acertaremos
otra vez, a v.m. que se me vigo anda mas dgan
fado.

Hago me v.m. mucha merced en queirme de todo lo que
a 901 12 301 190 91 190 190 2. 156 20 / y me ha gone
nado con el como av.m. le ha parecido, y v.m.
continue el adirme de todo lo que pareciere.

Alvey mofre la carta del ^{tu xi} ~~Alvey~~ de v.m.
escribio av.m. y yo creo muy bien lo que v.m.
avca de lo me escribe, pero v.m. proceda como
quiere y lo que se elley y me ha mandado
de ffrma av.m.

En lo de Nazareth 15 3. 3. 4 1 y
a v.m. visto d. m. lo que se le escribe y por alli
se ha de procurar el remedio de aquello que yo bien
creo lo que v.m. avca de lo me escribe de d. m. 12 7 10
9. 96 12 24 106 6 10 24 xi como denier.

Alfey se habido en los particulares de v.m.
y en lo malo lo sabe el marqués de Ayamonte y se
me mandado que se dable a Garnica para que se prote-
ja de Milan alguna parte de v.m., y quisiere se-
vir de su mano al marqués el cumplimiento de lo de ma-
y tambien sabore alfey un dia de por en lo de la co-
signacion que v.m. se bien menegor lo que sum.
da y un pedazo mas para lo que ay se gusta, y
canauera se mandado dar sum. a Ducados 20
de para la cedula /.

Lo de la profission se remediara al o. p. entiendo que
sum. me se mandado que se derma memoria del
yalo se se se para ordenar lo a don
de Padilla /.

Alfey se mostrado todo lo que v.m. me se
criso 4t 106 26 xi 10 21 8 20t mo 19 10 22 8 19 186 4t 19 2
15 36 24 le gase mal 21 y 18 8 1 12 24 3. 19 22. 2
18t 19 / y la poca confideracion y muestra de ma-
voluntad en 50 1 20 20 12 y 20 5 10 17 18 y
curar desacreditar y y p. y se /.

Y ha sido muy bien de v.m. me aya amfado de
todo esto y no se obra en el alfey y se parece se
mal / y v.m. se asegure que me acuerdo de v.m.
y de los trabajos y de seos verle fuerado
y lo procurare y lo sea con muy solon
ficio fuyo / y se queda v.m. lo ve

Don Alonso de Soto m.^o se depara en presto y en el
 effrenire lo q mas se offrefiere, anda deffecto de sacar
 aluz lo de don Gaspar y enmendas q si ellos lo encami
 nan bien q sea muy faul, boluiendo a los particula
 res der. m. meza d^o el ffey y aun effrito a con
 fuele y aun effuere a r. m. y le diga q para satis
 faga esta deffu^o. y cierto esto es muy so. No
 procurar q las obras lo muestren.

Agora andamos embaracados en lo de portugal
 y entiendo se cierto q toca el der. y sucesion
 al ffey m^o r. despues del Gr. l. m^o r. la pte
 pers. der. m. guarde y prospere como
 yo deshe. de Madrid en de Sept. 1578

der. m.

Ant. Perez

Summary of Text in English:

The long letter opens by listing the letters recently received from Vargas Mexia along with their dates. Antonio then mentions his hope of having another son, evidently to replace one who had died, but instead his wife bore a girl. He sympathizes that the pregnancy Vargas Mexia ended badly – but teases his friend that at least this proves they are both capable of having children, especially since Vargas Mexia is a younger man ‘with less to do!’ Antonio cryptically explains how he has executed various requests by Vargas. In particular, he mentions that he spoke to the king regarding the money Vargas Mexia needed to run the embassy, 200 ducados, and said he would respond as soon as possible with Philip II decision. In the last paragraph he mentions the death of Philip’s nephew, Sebastian King of Portugal, who passed in a battle in Morocco, which leaves Cardinal Henry, Philip’s then aged uncle, as king, with the king of Spain himself next in line.

Note: Judging by the script, Hernando de Escobar probably wrote this, but (given the intimate matters discussed) Pérez must have dictated it.

Transcription:

En esta responderé a tres cartas de vuestra merced de 4, 24 y XXVI de agosto y primero diré que me ha pesado hartos de no haber tenido lugar de escribir largo a V.M. con estos correos passados. Pero cierto no he podido más y bien lo creará V.M. pues no lo he hecho.

También diré primero que me ha pesado mucho del desgraciado parto de mi señora doña Ysabel, que estava yo muy contento por el contentamiento de V.M. pero pues ya son de prueba entrambos se podrá remediar el daño. Doña Juana parió pero hija, y yo estava con deseo de recobrar a Hernando. Quiza acertaremos otra vez aunque V.M. con ser más viejo anda más descansado.

Hizo me V.M mucha merced en avisarme de todo lo que toca a [CIFRA]. Yo me he gobernado con el como a V.M le ha parecido. Y V.M continúe el advertirme de todo lo que le paresciere.

Al rey mostré la carta que el [CIFRA] escribió a V.M y yo creo muy bien lo que V.M cerca de esto me escribe. Pero V.M proceda como procede que así lo quiere el Rey y me ha mandado que lo escriba a V.M.

En lo de Nazareth [Cifra] avrá visto V.M lo que el Rey le escribe y por allí se ha de procurar el remedio de aquello porque yo bien creo lo que V.M cerca desto me escribe de que no [CIFRA] como deviera.

Al Rey, he hablado en los particulares de V.M y en lo mal que lo hace el marqués de Ayamonte y ha me mandado que yo hable a Garnica para que se provea de lo de Milan alguna parte a V.M y Quiere escribir de su mano al Marqués el cumplimiento de lo demás y también hablare al Rey un día de estos en lo de la consignación pues V.M ha bien menester lo que su majestad da y un pedazo mas para lo que ay [=allí] se gasta. Y a Cañaveras ha mandado dar su majestad 200 ducados. Y se despachara la cedula.

Lo de la profesión se remediara a lo que entiendo para su majestad. Me ha mandado que le dé una memoria de ello y ya lo he hecho para ordenarlo a Don Antonio de Padilla.

Al Rey he mostrado todo lo que V.M me ha escrito [CIRFA] le haze mal [CIFRA] y la poca consideración y muestra de mala voluntad en [CIFRA] y procurar descreditar y [CIFRA]

Y ha sido muy bien que V.M me aya avisado de todo esto porque obra en el rey y le parece hacer mal. Y V.M se asegure que me acuerdo de V.M y de Sus trabajos y que desseo verle fuera de allí y que lo procurare y que sea con mucho beneficio suyo. Y si yo puedo V.M lo verá.

Don Alonso de Sotaomayor se despachara presto y con el escribiré lo que más se ofresciere, anda desseoso de sacar a luz lo de Don Gasper y en verdad que si ellos lo encaminan bien que sea muy fácil. Volviendo a los particulares de V.M me ha dicho el Rey y aun escrito que consuele y aun esfuerce a V.M y le diga cuan satisfecha esta de su servicio. Y cierto esto es mucho. Y yo procurare que las obras lo muestren.

Agora andamos embaraçados en lo de Portugal y entiendese cierto que toca el derecho y sucession al Rey nuestro señor después del Cardinal. Nuestro señor la illustre persona de V.M guarde y prospere como yo deseo. De Madrid 13 de septiembre 1578.

De v m

Antonio Pérez

He senor

136

Poraver escrito V.m. p. co. dia ha
no tiene mucho quedado aqui i. este
corres va de pasado con uno de p. para
el principe de Parma con sus de diez d.
Se le mandado p. que se p. de p. de
Alemanes v. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
con el con el El p. de p. de p. de p. de
ellos. V.m. mandara p. de p. de p. de
El de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
con la va la de p. de p. de p. de p. de
de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
Solicitando a las con la de p. de p. de p. de
de V.m. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
V.m. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
castro. y que se de p. de p. de p. de p. de
comar ellos lo p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
p. de p. de Madrid a 15 de mayo 1578.

Entretanto q. va a dar particular
de la de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de
no se si a las de p. de p. de p. de p. de
de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de p. de

Int. senor

Summary of Text in English:

The letter left with another letter sent to the prince of Parma containing a money order to fund the demobilization of German soldiers and give them their pay as reached in an agreement by Don Juan. Along with the letter was a 'duplicado' of an earlier letter sent by His Majesty to Parma. Antonio tells Vargas Mexia that he has spoken to Garnica (treasury official) and that he will receive the 6,000 ducados from Cayas needed for embassy business. Pérez also implied that Vargas Mexia could take from it what he needed for himself as well.

Note: The first part of the letter is not written in the hand of Antonio Pérez but rather one of the other secretaries. However, on the last section Antonio Pérez writes a comment that he was not sure if Cayas has sent the cédula, but the king would let both of them know.

Transcription:

Por aver escrito a V.M pocos dias ha no terne mucho que dezir aquí. Este correo va despachado con un despacho para el príncipe de Parma con aviso de cierto dinero que se le ha mandado proveer para despedir los Alemanes viejos digo para darles dos pagos como lo concertó el señor que Don Juan que haya gloria con ellos. V.M mandara que en recibiendo el despacho se despache luego con el al príncipe. Con esta va la duplicada de la carta de su majestad del ultimo del pasado. Avisarme a V.M del recibo solicitando a Garnica lo del dinero por la provision de V.M me dijo que estotro dia se han proveido a V.M por via de Çayas 6,000 ducados para gastos. Y pues esto es asi podrá V.M tomar de ellos lo que huviera menester. [Insert in AP's hand:] Entretanto que Va orden particular para lo que ha de ser de V.M aunque no sé si Çayas embió alguna pero el rey nos lo dira. Nuestro Señor etc de Madrid 5 de noviembre 1578

Antonio Pérez

Folio 148:

Este libro va despachado con diligencia prin-
cipalmente por lo que toca a las letras
del doctor que han de pagar los mercedarios
en Basilea con lo que se viene a. y por
lo que toca a tiempo de mandados sum
despachar a guisa de. y por lo que toca
de las cartas de v.m. de qui. y por lo
que toca a el d. de los 12. de cuyo
recibo me mandaron v.m. avisar. y
despachar luego al principe con el despa-
cho de v.m. su ex. con gran diligencia.
Como medico Garica de Avila y su hijo
a v.m. dineros, le fuere lo que a v.m. visto
por mi carta, despues me faldan sumas.
Por lo que el dinero era para otros efectos.
y por lo que Garica me faldan sumas. y por lo
que solicitan de seembre a v.m.
alguna cosa, y por lo que para
condon a los de seembre mayor que queda

En Madrid despachado por el doctor
Don A. de los 20 de mayo de 1778.

By Can

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This letter was sent by express courier so that Vargas Mexia would know about letters of credit already dispatched by the king to his bankers,. Pérez claims that this explains why he had not responded to the other letters he received from Vargas Mexia. He stated that Garnica had sent the money that Vargas Mexia had requested, but Pérez continued, the king had told him that the money was for another reason, nothing to do with the upkeep of the embassy, and so he would ask the king to send more, if possible with don Alonso de Sotomayor, who was about to leave for Paris. Finally he mentioned the death of Don Diego de Cúñiga, Vargas Mexia's predecessor as-ambassador in Paris.

Transcription:

Ilustre Señor

Este correo va despachado en diligencia principalmente por lo que toca a las letras del dinero que han despacha los mercaderes en Besancon [Besançon], a 10 del que viene, y porque lleguen a tiempo le ha mandado su majestad despachar apriesa. Y por esto no se responde a las cartas de V.M de primero y 2 de este pero lleva el duplicado del 12 de cuyo recibo me mandara V.M avisar y despachar luego al príncipe con el despacho que va para su excelencia con gran diligencia.

Como me dijo Garnica que se avían proveydo a V.M dineros le escribo lo que aurá visto por mi carta. Después me ha dicho su majestad que aquel dinero era para otro efecto, y no para lo que Garnica me havía dicho y assi ando solicitando que se embie a V.M algún dinero. Y lo procurare para con Don Alonso de Sotomayor que queda ya de partida. Nuestro señor guarde y prospere la illustre persona V.M como yo deseo de Madrid a 21 de noviembre 1578.

Y aviso tengo casi acabado de que se nos libre el sueldo del embaxador, y hoy lo tratare con Garnica. Y diz que murió don Diego de Cúñiga.

De v.m.

Antonio Pérez
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Jlle. S^r

Aqui responderé à todas las cartas de v. m. con lo me
 Sallo q^{on} de v. m. y por v. m. de 8^{ta} 2. 7. 13. 14.
 22 y 23 de noviembre, auno q^{on} a algunos puntos de llo
 ya tengo satisfecho en otras cartas mias.

El hijo de Antonio martin Aleman de Augusta, me dio
 luego q^{on} vino, y dijo q^{on} despues tornaria mas despacio,
 no lo hizo, y poco sa. q^{on} topando le yo me digo q^{on} vendria
 aq^{on} me y traeria con figo a aquel mercader de los effritorios
 y relojes, no se filo para.

Lo q^{on} 3 21. 18. 20 3. 31 q^{on} 3. 19 y 2. 19 se sa con
 fidezado y se deffearia pero no se puede affi. de q^{on} se
 pero el t^{on} es gran p^{on}ers. para todo, y segun p^{on}lor
 9. 8 20 1. 18 2. 20. 10 3. 21 2. 19 10 1. 16. 1

En lo del 21. t^{on} 2 a 20. 18 no ay q^{on} de llo fino q^{on} todo
 tornara mejor termino con la nueva orden q^{on} se sa
 dado de q^{on} no p^{on} y 15. 12 15 y 20 10. a 18. 1. 1. 9. 8
 fino solo x. e. lo qual se le escribe agora 2. 9. y 3. 1
 10 22 4 22. 20 2. 1 y con asar 8 3 2. 11 46 4
 3 9. 11 205 en los de ay 10 2. 19. 20. 118 90 19 36 19 no 19.

Tambien asara agora 3. 1 8 a. 106 20 19 226 1
 4 1. 10 y 21 19 4 y a y 106 21 10. 96 8 1 11 y 20
 10. a 18 y 15 8 3 106 20 2. 2. 180 20 / 102 106 1
 8 20 36 19 4 y 15, 8 19 20 24 9. y 96 186 96.

Harto me sa pesado de q^{on} el credito q^{on} aui a de
 embiar se a v. m. se aya de temido tanto, y yo de

Y do soy a Sablar a Garmica sobrello y quedame
 en q me embiaria uno de 20 50 para Vayaco
 el correo de sta no se, y deques de comer feto se to
 nado a acordar por un villete, de feto rñ finto q
 me le embie por q and se ayudo feto v.m. en la nea
 do q representa la qual creo q muy bien
 y la se representado afu m. /.

Lo dela promissim de v.m. de feto q encaminar to
 afu gusto como v.m. mismo querria, y oreamo q
 enello lo q puedo p. querria concluir lo de mane
 q para lo pasado se diese orden para q en
 q pagasen en milan, y q en lo por venir se si
 se ay la provision av.m. de feto 400 50 al mes
 no alcare la mano dello y dello q su m. resoluio
 auisare av.m. / 12 tengo buena esperanza de feto de feto

12 y 20 10. a 18 15 12 36 19 94 2. 19 194 34 19 2
 9. 20. 1 3. 19 fa 19 y crea v.m. que no se quedo
 entre rñglones 3 36 19 96 144 7 3 ho 19 co
 se 24 20 y 12 3 10. 20 10. 22 36 /.

Viose la copia de carta de 3 p. 10 22. 94 22.
 2. para 8 19 te y algo parecia tener delo q
 v.m. noto enellas.

Con la de 2 de noviembre vino la carta de Alonso
 Curriel sobre lo de san Roman, y la nueva dio ma
 contento, y v.m. crea q no ganaron d. p. 4
 y 20 10. a 18 15 10. 22 36 8 1 94 19 22. C. 20
 19. 11 9 20 y 94 x e por q parecio y 10. 2 15 2
 y fueron auemazios a rezaron contra si 22. 20
 Ta 24 19 5. 18 2. 96 /.

esto me embia
 a Garmica
 esta man
 tener q
 no pzo lo
 de feto y
 de feto

Su mag.^a vio la carta q^d v.m. le effruió a 2 de
 noviembre 1578 p^o 196 bt 36 gt 3.3.6. y dize q^d toda
 via pro aue v.m. de 15 20 8 18+19 8 17 96 36
 24 2 14+ 22 9 8 20+, 15 14 7 8 14+ si y 4+20
 y 3. 14 2. 16 19 y 3 6 16 14 22. 22+ 3+ 19, 22+ 206
 21. 8 19 186 19+ y 106 1 8 3 2. 156 20 20+ 10. 186
 24 14+ y si /.

Muy bueno fue el aduertim^{to}. q^d v.m. effruió
 en lo de 26 14 gt 3. 26 18. gt 24 19+ 1+ 1 9. 19+
 1061 encomienda o cosa se mefante antes que
 p^o 106 1 9 14+ 206 22 206, por todo respetto
 y alla entienda v.m. lo q^d en conformidad de lo
 es ordenado en ello fu m^{to}.

La dificultad q^d ay en esta corte para saldar dine
 ros fin muy particular adula de su mag.^a se p^o a
 a garzica, y el trabajo q^d p^ossaua en saldar los don
 diego de cuniga, y quanto menos podra saldar los agora
 v.m. / Veremos si cumple lo q^d me se prometido de
 embiarme el credito q^d arriba digo para q^d vaya
 con este correo.

En lo de mas q^d aqui yo no digo me remito a don
 Alonso de sotomayor que como quien se avisto lo
 q^d aqui passa, y sabe lo q^d yo se platicado
 con el sobre todo, podra dar av.m. muy parti
 cular relacion dello. m^{to} B^{to} la M^{te} pers.^a de v.m.
 guarde y p^ossere como yo desseo / de Madrid 8 de Fe^{bre}. 1579.

de v.m. J^o p^o Ant^o Lopez.

(Marginal notes on the left side of the page, partially obscured by the binding, include: "quedame", "Vayaca", "felo de to", "i finito q", "en la nea", "muy bien", "minar to", "me q", "de mane", "ra q^d en", "mir se p", "5^o al me", "refolui", "de Sago", "4 3+ 19", "se queda", "ho 19 co", "t. 9+ 22", "mez delo", "de Alon", "ua dio m", "p^o 14", "2. C. 20", "10. 2 15", "si 22. 20", "ito me embia", "in garzica", "extra manana", "y no se pare", "detener q^d de correo", "imposando", "no p^ozo llevarle", "a otro correo", "q^d pastiralugo", "de quica", "de p^ossere", "con el credito", "de correo".)

Summary of Text in English:

In this letter Antonio responds to 8 letters ranging from the 21 October to the 23 November 1578. He responds to the matters which were not addressed in his previous letters. He mentions a visit from the son of Antonio Maytin, a German merchant, who promises to return with another merchant who will supply him with clocks and desks. He continues by explaining that the funds Vargas Mexia asked for has been detained and that he would talk to Garnica about it; adding that he hopes to send a letter of credit for 2,000 escudos in the mail that night. Antonio then made reference to a previous letter written by Vargas Mexia and places the content in code.

He added a post script stating that the credit could not be sent until the following day, but that the letter, of which he wrote at that time, could not be detained further and thus he would send a duplicate with the credit the following day.

Transcription:

Aquí responderé a todas las cartas de V.M con que me hallo que son de xxj y xxvij de octubre. 2, 7, 13, 14, 22 y 23 de noviembre. Aunque a algunas puntos dellas ya tengo satisfecho en otras cartas mias.

El hijo de Antonio Maytin, Alemán de Augusta, me vio luego que vino y dixo que después tornaria mas despacio, no lo hizo y poco ha que, topándole yo, me dijo que vendría a ver me y traería consigo a aquel mercader de los escritorios y relojes. No sé si lo hara.

Lo [CIFRA] se ha considerado y se dessearía pero no se puede assi de golpe pero el tiempo es gran persona para todo y según [CIFRA].

En lo del [CIFRA] no ay que decir sino que todo tomara mejor termino con la nueva orden que se ha dado de que no [CIFRA] sino solo [CIFRA] lo qual se le escribe agora [CIFRA] y con cessar [CIFRA].

Tambien cessara agora [CIFRA].

Harto me ha pesado de que el crédito que habla de embiarse a V.M se aya detenido tanto. Y yo he ido hoy a hablar a Garnica sobre ello. Y quédame en que me embiaria uno **de dos** mil ducados para que vaya con el correo de esta noche y después de comer se lo he tornado a acordar por un billete. Deseo infinito que me le embie por que con el se ayudasse V.M en la necidad que representa la qual creo yo muy bien y la he representado a su majestad.

Lo de la provision de V.M desseo yo encaminar todo a su gusto como V.M mismo querria y créame que hara en ello lo que puedo. Querria concluir lo de manera que para lo passado se diesse orden para que en lo que pagassen en Milan y que en lo porvenir se hiziesse allí la provision a V.M de hasta 400 ducados al mes. No alcarré la mano de ello y de lo que su majestad resolviese avisare a V.M . y tengo buena esperança de le se ha de hazer.

[CIFRA] y crea V.M que no se queda entre renglones [CIFRA] como se [CIFRA].

Viose la copia de carta de [CIFRA] para [CIFRA] y algo parecía tener de lo que V.M noto en ella.

Con la de 2 de noviembre vino la carta de Alanzo de Curiel sobre lo de Sant Homer [= St Omer] , y la nueva dio mucho contento y V.M crea que no ganaron [CIFRA] porque parecio y [CIFRA] y fueron ave marias que rezaron contra si [CIFRA].

Su majestad vio la carta que V.M le escribió a 2 de noviembre [CIFRA] y si.

Muy bueno fue el advertimiento que V.M escivió en lo de [CIFRA] encomiendo o cosa semejante antes que [CIFRA] por todo respecto y alla entenderá V.M lo que en conformidad de esto ha ordenado en ello su majestad.

La dificultad que hay en essa corte para hallar dineros sin muy particular cédula de su majestad he dicho Garnica, y el trabajo que passava en hallarlos don Diego de Cúñiga, y quanto menos p[odra hallarlos agora V.M. Veremos si cumple lo que me ha prometido de embiarme el crédito que arriba digo para que vaya con este correo.

En lo demás, que aquí yo no digo, me remito a Don Alonso de Sotomayor que como quien ha visto lo que aquí passa y sabe lo que yo he platicado con él sobre todo, podra dar a V.M muy particular relación de ello. Nuestro Señor la illustre persona de V.M guarde y prospere como yo desso. De Madrid 8 de octubre 1578.

De V M

Antonio Pérez

[El crédito] me embia [a dezir] Garnica que no me le puede [dar] hasta mañana y no ha parecido detener este correo importando [tanto] pero llevarle ha otro correo que partira luego [con el] duplicado, y quiça despacharé yo con el crédito [para] alcançar este correo.

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M^{te} S^r

Las cartas de v.m. a que deuo respuesta son
de 7, 18, 24 de di. 5, y 14 de enero, y aqui
satisfaze a los puntos dellas, con dezir primero q
son de mucha satisfacion a mo amo, el qual
las ve todas, digo las q son muiene, y suelga mui
con las auiso y confidencias de v.m. en todo lo
q se frue, y asi en esto no ay lo de 30 sino a v.m.
continuen lo q se ayaqui.

Y la carta de Ju Ruiz de Herrera a vno conta
de v.m. de 18 y me se maravillado de lo qalli
se faze, y en lo q toca a vez libre a v.m.
de tanta osadumbre no me desfuzdo, y por
mirando como se encamine a lo q se faze, y crea v.m. q no
me desaydare en esto, pues nadie dessea mas
el decaño de v.m. y su promesso y contenta
m^{te}. q yo.

en lo del dinero a v.m. remittio aca aun no
se podido saber a fin. por q se a estado
algunos dias absente en San Lorenzo, y de aqui
de venido al pado en tenido con poco de roma
digo, y se lo de pado para de 30 felo en
presencia quando viniese aqui a me llamase,
lo qual sera presto, y entonces lo sacre como
conviene.

De la carta que le pinte de

Por la de v. m. entendi la llegada ay de don
 Alonso de Soto m. s. y oves bien q. v. m. f.
 deuiso seguir mudo con el y de entender de
 tros de testigo de vista todo lo q. fuere q.
 rido saber p. y quanto al q. v. m. dize
 de q. in specie i in genere 3t 176 8 1 184 19 6
 algo de lo que de 3 8 19 186 3t 3 3
 q. aun q. se le dio a entender 1 8 1 6t 11
 20. 3 24 144 184 12 y 3 6 1 16 18 10
 3t 36 q. se a pasado (por q. affi conuino)
 8 106 1 18 1 186 20t 10 186 24t 226
 4 2 6 1 10 0 1 el yudo entender 24t 1
 8 14 14 3 46 3t 1. y coneso queda
 v. m. estar cierto de q. ay todo recato en
 papeles con y se sabe auiso de q. lo q. d.
 3t 14 20 10 2 190 36 venga en la 14. 5
 22. 20 18 10 3 20t por q. el ti 3t
 18. tiene mucha ocupacion y no 22 8
 3t reconocer todas 3. 19 co 19 y con
 esta forma no avara peligro y de otra
 nera le podria auer p.

Puedo auisado del p. m. 22. 4t y a 3
 por lo q. del v. m. me 9 14 24 3t 4
 6 16 y me 6 6 y 20 9. 20t 3t 3 con
 v. m. me lo adierte p.

Sobre el particular de v. m. me Sa Sa
 largo don los de v. m. y entre los

dos auem
 nos Sa
 Justo y m
 estan Junt
 por lo de
 lo mas p
 lo q. v. m.
 Sifido mu
 de la cart
 Sa Sa
 Lo de 6.
 rente du
 7 8 a q
 Sifido a
 dio de q.
 2a no fon
 mos salud
 los ms de
 por 2. mo
 orind 26

m. s. en

180
 dos auemos conferido lo q se ha ofrecido y
 nos ha parecido / y ami me parece muy
 justo y muy conueniente q se procure qd v. m.
 esten juntos y no tan diuididos por la costa y
 por lo demas / y asi lo fratare con su m.
 lo mas presto q pudiese y dare en ello todo
 lo q v. m. sabe q procuro en sus cosas y
 confido muy bien en freuirle sobrello y de
 de la carta don lorenzo de vargas como lo
 hara luego q aqui llegue.

Lo de 6. 20 10 y 94 y 20 144 q es muy diffe-
 rente du 94 36 24 xe 146 19 224 C. a. se
 7 8 a quella arremetida y dequies de camino
 q hizo a 10 8 20 18. 106. 2. 19. 01 que se le
 dio de q otro dia dare cuenta a v. m. q ago-
 ra no tengo lugar. en esta casa tene-
 mos salud. padres y hijos y doña Juana bea-
 las mis de v. m. muchas veces. Cuya M.
 por su m. r. guarde como q desee. de Ma-
 drid 26 de eno 1579

J. V. m.
 Juan Lopez.

Summary of Text in English:

In the beginning of the letter Antonio Pérez makes the damaging admission that he had not shown the king all the letters that Vargas Mexia had written, which the king would have considered treason. He mentioned that he had not spoken to the king about the other request for money because the king had been at the Escorial and then the king had suffered from a cold. He places some of the letter in code and ends that he was hopeful that Vargas Mexia would receive what he needed.

Transcription:

Las cartas de V.M a que debo respuesta son de 7, 18, 24 de diciembre y 14 de enero. Y aquí satisfaré a los puntos dellas con dezir primero que son de mucha satisfacción a nuestro amo, el cual las ve todos, digo las que conuiene, y huelga mucho con los avisos y consideraciones de V.M en todo lo que escribe y assi en esto no ay que decir sino que V.M continúe en lo que hasta aquí.

Vi la carta de Juan Ruiz de Herrera que vino con la de V.M de 18 y me he maravillado de lo que allí se usa. Y en lo que toca a ver libre a V.M de tanta pesadumbre no me descuydo. Y voy mirando como se encamine que tenga V.M ay su provisión la que se suele y crea V.M que no me descuidaré en esto pues nadie dessea más el descanso de V.M y su provecho y contentamiento que yo.

En lo del dinero que V.M remitió aca aun no he podido hablar a su majestad por que ha estado algunos días ausente en San Lorenzo, y después de venido al Pardo ha tenido un poco de romadizo, y he lo dejado para decírselo en presencia cuando viniese aquí o me llamase lo cual será presto y entonces lo haré como conviene.

Por la de xxiiij entendí la llegada ay de Don Alonso de Sotomayor y creo bien que V.M se deuio holgar mucho con el y de entender de nostros de testigo de vista todo lo que hubiere querido saber. Y quanto a lo que V.M diize de que en specie o in genere [CIFRA] dize algo de lo que

[CIFRA] ¿digo? que aunque se le dio a entender [CIFRA] que ha pasado (porque assi convino) [CIFRA] el pudo entender [CIFRA]. Y con esto puede V.M estar cierto de que ay todo recato en sus papeles. Con yr sobre aviso de que lo que he [CIFRA] venga en la [CIFRA] porque el [CIFRA] tiene mucha ocupación y no [CIFRA] reconocer todas [CIFRA] y con [¿ver?] esta forma no habrá peligro y de otra manera le podría haber.

Quedo avisado del [CIFRA] por lo que dél V.M me [CIFRA] y me [CIFRA] como V.M me lo advierte.

Sobre el particular de V.M me ha hablado largo Don Lorenzo de Vargas y entre los dos habemos conferido lo que se ha offrecido y nos ha parecido, y a mi me parece muy justo y muy conviniente que se procure que vuestras mercedes estén juntos y no tan divididos por la costa y por lo demás. Y assi lo trataré con su majestad lo mas presto que pudiere y haré en ello todo lo que V.M sabe que procuro en sus cosas y ha sido muy bien escrevirle sobrello y que le de la carta Don Lorenzo de Vargas como lo hara luego que aquí llegue.

Lo de [CIFRA] es muy diferente [CIFRA] aquella arremetida y desuio de camino que hizo [CIFRA] que se le dio de que otro día daré cuenta a V.M que agora no tengo lugar.

En esta casa tenemos salud padres e hijos y Doña Juana besa las manos de V.M muchas vezes, cuya illustre persona Nuestro señor guarde como yo deseo. De Madrid 26 de enero 1579.

Me. senor

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Porq no dudo sino q aura llegado por alla la grita y men-
 tiras qan corrido por aqui y por rias de cosas mias,
 dire aqui breuem^{te} av. m. la verdad de lo q passa por
 su satisfacion. 1. 19+ 22. xe 24 36 19 9. 12 y passa 96 19
 fano por bien vo p q 4 24 20+20 24 9. 20 8 3 ra
 4 a. 20 6. 19 y el refuys melo dio a entender 158
 p 2. 1 96 21. 8 3 2. 20 24 19 4 36 19. at 3+ 14, 21
 206 6. 15 5 1 661 se junta en y viesien que
 orden se podria dar en pff 36 4 3. 10. 1 10+ 3+ 20 y
 4 y 21. 3 ra 1. 5 146 19+ 15 8 2 11. y 206 1 3+ 3
 106 1 19 3 18. 6 36 / y de los mismos consultantes
 se entender 15 9 166 226 20 2. 15 10 8 20 186 y 21 15
 8 1 186 9. 5 y 22. 20 19+ 19 24 19+ 24 9. a. 8 3 ra/
 8 1 11 18 46 vo 8 3 declararlo por entonces con oca-
 sion de cierto 22. 24 3 21. 5 166 21. y a y 186 22.
 67 96 21. dire q podia ayudar al 11 81 y 19 8 1
 186 4+ 3 11 66 10. 2 1. 196 6+ 2 17 16 3. 9+ 2. 1 9.
 21. p 2 y 106 at 96 24 22 196, 15 y a 1 21. al
 cabo serio 2 4 10 10+ 1 10 y 15 19+ 3+ 6
 defengano y 3. 22. 20 19+ 4+ 3. 4+ 18+ 1 19 21
 a 19 186 19 36 19 F. 106 19 fundamentos que tenia
 106 1. 24 19+ y 10. 116 8 3 11 66 10. 2, 186 9. a 12
 3+ 7 8 9+ 9. 1 9+ 7 9. 10 8 2 3 7. 3 196 18+ 19
 18 26 16 1 2. 21. 4 3+ a. 1 18. 206 1. 15 8 3 8

7

8 2 226 21. 2 19 6. 19 196 en la averiguacion
 Verdad / 1962 ² entretanto 2 96 10 94 22. 201
 8 1 36 94 3 2 7 10 2 94 a. 20 6. 19 15 21 8 20
 94 19 24 2 1 6. 20 36 15 204 22. 20 21 18 20 36 e
 ciesta forma / y ha venido a servir que juntar
 186 96 36 94 3 hu 15 24 36 9. 20 y 15 21. 7 8 2 19
 106 43 adonde quiezo a fuese / y esto fuese 2
 20 36 6 94 3 ra 94 a. 20 6. 2 19 / St 194 19 94
 qua 8 4 19 19. qui 8 19 194 663 224 estando tan
 publico como estava 8 1 186 96 8 3 2 196. 8 1
 194 24 8 3 ra 226 20 8 3 94 19 56 10 20 15 94 19
 22 18. 10 21 que dello se me sigue / 8 1 18 8
 226 21. 18. 1 19. 1 10 3 22. St 22. 94 10 96 19
 186 20 fuera razon 56 1 20. 20 24 15 y 4 104
 19 20 24 22. 20. 22 204 22. 206 94 2 56 1 20 15 8
 194 19 19 26 1 2 94 1 2 4 10 104 1 10 y / y junta
 94 se conso el conser el 19 96 y fer yo de mio
 filosofo como v. m. sabe Se deshecho con mudo
 veras recoger me y vivir una vida sosegada y
 19 54 19 10. 96 y 10 36 18 a. 194 224 20 11 8
 22 8 19 10 8 20. 4 19 196 vivir en una m
 ma parte y pueblo 186 15 2 19 Ha y 21. 106
 tanta invidia y rabia y falsedad 24 5. 1 10 10 2
 21 19 20 3. 56 1 20. 15 15 1 3 20 19. de au
 recumado el 94 19 y 20 186 204 19 20 24 4
 15 y a 20 94 104 9. 56 96 3 94 2 19. 94 8 3
 a 96 194 5. 1 4 1 a 1 19 66 15 8 19 22. 20 1
 226 204 3 9. y B6 15 sus ministros 3. 19
 19 20. 19 94 3 94 19 19 8 206 y lo de mas

199
 aura oyo / pero 3. 4+20 9-9 8 19 21. Vo 15 24 5.
 21. 20 96 9. 20 3 10+1 10 y 71 18+19 14 19 y 21 156
 24 196 14 8 64 15 8 19 18+ 21+ 6 96 y por el 7 20
 106 11 19 226 9+ 186 3+ 96 Sagesse de Siral y p. 1
 10+ 19. 9+ 8 116 3 21. ps 10 20. 19+ 106 2 66 21. 2+
 fessasse y permaneciessse y 21 8 18 19 19+ 20 10 2
 debago de grandes juram. 21. 8 3 y 20 106
 11 2 19 226 5 146 9+ 21. Vo sentia muy 156 5
 a 8 19+ 9+ 7. 3 18. 20 9+ y 21 15 21+ 21 20
 8 1 96 156 continuar en servir 15 9+ 16. 1 96 12+
 8 1 2. 16 19 9+ Vo 24 12 5. 20 y po 15 7. 16
 20+ 19 15 56 15 20+ 19 9. 1 9+ 19 / 15 8 1 8 19
 186 9+ y 19. 9. 1 96 15 186 2. 1 96 y 66 20.
 no se ena paraza el negocio pero de lo que fue
 re auisare av. m. / Dona Juana y m.
 si p. tienen salud y bejan las m.
 de v. m. muchas veces Cuyas de p. s.
 m. C. guarde y prospere como yo deseo, de
 Madrid a 15 de Abril 1579

6. l. mis dev. m. fu mas
 cierto
 Ant. Lopez
 p. p. el me burlo y por
 alta de tpo no se torna
 esorebir esta carta y
 no tener esta que se p.
 enueno mas de lo que aqui se
 de no esorino y no pero bebo
 m. las m. muchas veces
 p. de p. s.

The letter opens by stating that Pérez wanted to clear up any rumors and lies that had been circulating about him during this time in April 1579 – but, unfortunately for historians, he did so mostly in code. In one of the ‘clear’ passages, he shared his plan to retire from the Court and live ‘a peaceful and Christian life’ (which, according to other sources, meant that he planned to retire to Pastrana, the home of the princess of Éboli, who was suspected and accused of being involved in the murder of Escobedo). The script of the letter suggests that Escobar, Pérez’s principal secretary, wrote the main text and that Antonio Pérez only wrote a missing line, but their hands are very similar. If so, this suggests that Escobar knew both the code and more information than was originally thought.

Transcription:

Porque no dudo sino que aura llegado por allá la grita y mentiras que han corrido por aquí estos días de cosas mías, diré aquí brevemente a V.M. la verdad de lo que passa, por su satisfacción.

[CIFRA] passa [CIFRA] tuvo por bien [CIFRA] y el de suyo me lo dio a entender [CIFRA] se juntassen y viessen qué orden se podría dar en [Cifra] y los mismos consultantes se entendió [CIFRA] declararlo por entonces con ocasión de cierto [CIFRA] dixo que podía ayudar al [CIFRA] al cabo se vio [CIFRA] desengaño y [CIFRA] fundamentos que tenia [CIFRA] en la averiguación de verdad. Porque entretanto [CIFRA] en cierta forma. Y ha venido a decir que juntaría [CIFRA] adonde quiera que fuesse. Y que esto fuesse [CIFRA]

[CIFRA] estando tan publico como estava [CIFRA] que dello se me sigue. [CIFRA] y que fuera razón [CIFRA] y juntándose con esto el conocer el [CIFRA] y ser yo de mio tan filósopho como V.M. sabe, he desseado con muchas veras recogerme y vivir una vida sosegada y christiana. [CIFRA] vivir en una misma parte y pueblo [CIFRA] Ha [CIFRA] tanta inuidia y rabia y falsedad [CIFRA].

De averse reçumado el [CIFRA] sus ministros [CIFRA] y lo de mas que V.M. avrá oydo. Pero [CIFRA] y por el y [CIFRA] ha hecho dezir al y [CIFRA] sosegasse y permaneciesse y [CIFRA] debaxo de grandes juramentos. [CIFRA] sentía mucho que [CIFRA] continuar en servir [CIFRA] no sé en que parara el negocio pero de lo que fuere, avisaré a V.M.

Doña Juana y nuestros hijos tienen salud y besan las manos de V.M. muchas vezes, cuya illustre persona Nuestro Señor guarde y prospere como yo desseo. De Madrid a 15 de Abril 1579.

Besa las manos de V. M. su más cierto servidor

Antonio Pérez

Post Script: El papel me burló y por falta de tiempo no se torna a escribir esta carta. Y por no tener cosa que dezir de nuevo mas de lo que aquí se dize no escrivo yo, pero beso a V.M las manos muchas vezes.

Hernando de Escobar

Fr. Francisco de Aguilar, su compañero, y los del otro Religioso, y Criado ya corrompidos. Conduxéronse, pues, á Granada al Convento de la Victoria, desde donde en una muy autorizada procesion compuesta del Clero, Religiones, Cofradías, Caballeros y todo el pueblo, fuéron llevados á su Convento de Agustinos, y allí se dió sepultura á Fr. Juan Muñoz en el hueco de la pared de la izquierda en la Capilla de Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza. A pocos dias le celebró honras su Convento con gran concurso de toda la Ciudad, en las que predicó D. Fr. Lorenzo de Figueroa, del Orden de Santo Domingo, Obispo electo de Sigüenza, y en el Sermon dixo entre otras cosas: *Para mí tengo que han muerto Mártires estos siervos de Dios. El odio á nuestra fe en los agresores es manifesto. En lo demas yo hallo circunstancias para afirmarlo así* (a).

JUAN DE VARGAS MEXIA, fué hijo de Antonio de Vargas, natural de Caravanchel, y de Doña Juana de Vargas, natural de Ballecas, ambas aldeas de Madrid, y hermano del célebre Licenciado Francisco de Vargas Mexía, que asistió al Concilio de Trento. Por Cédula dada en San Lorenzo á 24 de Junio de 1576, refrendada de Juan Vazquez, le hizo S. M. merced de Hábito de Santiago, de que el Consejo Real de las Ordenes le mandó dar título en 15 de Marzo de 1577. Fué del Consejo del Señor D. Felipe II, que le envió á Francia por su Embaxador, en donde estaba ya en dicho año de 1577, y murió allí el de 1580. Fundó en Madrid un mayorazgo para sus descendientes en la Parroquia de Santiago con Capilla pro-

(a) Vidal, Histor. del Convento de Salamanca, tom. 1. c. 7. fol. 307.

propia, su título de San Juan, en la Iglesia de Santa Clara de Monjas Franciscas, para su entierro, varias memorias y obras pias para estudiantes, y dotaciones de huérfanas de su familia. Yace sepultado en dicha Capilla, frente de la puerta de la Iglesia, en donde se ve su estatua de mármol de rodillas, en acto de orar ácia el Altar, y por debaxo una lápida de la misma piedra con esta inscripcion:

AQUI YACE EL SEÑOR JUAN DE VARGAS MES-
SIA, DEL CONSEJO DEL REY NUESTRO SE-
ÑOR DON PHELIPE SEGUNDO, SU EMBAXADOR
EN FRANCIA, CABALLERO DE LA ORDEN DE
SANTIAGO, EL QUAL MANDO FUNDAR DE SU
ACIENDA UN COLEGIO EN LA CIUDAD DE SA-
LAMANCA PARA QUE ESTUDIASEN LOS DE SU
LINAJE, Y QUE NO LOS ABIENDO SE COM-
BIRTIESE EN OTRAS OBRAS PIAS QUE DEXO.
FALLECIO EN PARIS EL AÑO DE 1588, Y
SUS ALBACEAS TRASLADARON SU CUERPO EN
ESTA SU CAPILLA EN 7 DE JULIO DEL AÑO
DE 1588. (a)

* JUAN LOPEZ DE HOYOS (*Mtro.*) natural de Madrid, como él mismo lo dice en muchas partes de sus obras, y particularmente en la Carta á la Villa, que pone en el libro de las Exéquias de la Reyna Doña Isabel, á la que da fin con estas palabras: *No diré yo esto, sino que todo me doy á mi patria, y mucho á mis amigos, y toda mi vida y tiempo gasto en enseñar, así en el estudio de V. S. con buenas letras, como en la* de-

(a) Genealogía para su Hábito: Gil González: D. Diego Lopez de Zarate, Descripción Genealógica de los Vargas.

Tom. III.

Q

Ciphre de Don Juan:

